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like, instead of what he does. Thinks I to myself, my boy, you're a clever schemer, and would make a good Catholic, if you were only the least morsel of a Christian. I couldn't help thinking, your honour, how the little one would be laughing when he heard the chop of the other's teeth, and himself sing out of harm's way. But I couldn't help thinking, too, that myself was just like the great fool of a fish, and that same note like the little fellow which blackened the water to prevent him from seeing where to find what he wanted."

"You have assuredly hit the nail on the head here, Tom, at all events," said Mr. R., smiling at the humorous manner in which our friend confessed, and illustrated his perplexity. "I must try and help you to see more clearly."

"You will not, I trust, Father M.," continued the Rector, "set me down as an uncharitable judge when I speak of instances wherein Roman Catholic writers are, as I firmly believe, justly chargeable with intentional evasions. Wherever a glaring case presents itself which it is impossible to explain except by incapacity or dishonesty, the ability which the controversialists of the Romanist faith exhibit leaves me no alternative but in adopting the latter as the true explanation. I cannot regard this note, among other things, except as afeat of sleight-of-hand so dexterously executed as to baffle the suspicion which it excites. The juggler himself, however, knows the deceit which he practises. Every honest Roman Catholic should reprobate with indignation this blot upon his Bible."

"This note is an attempt to get rid of the argument against a *corporal* presence of the Lord Jesus in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, derived from the words 'the flesh profiteth nothing,' and is as follows:—

"Dead flesh separated from the spirit in the gross manner they suppose they were to eat his flesh would profit nothing. Neither doth man's flesh, that is to say, man's natural and carnal apprehension (which refuses to be subject to the spirit and words of Christ) profit anything. But it would be the height of blasphemy to say the living flesh of Christ (which we receive in the blessed sacrament with His spirit, that is, with His soul and divinity) profiteth nothing. For if Christ's flesh had profiteth us nothing. He would never have taken flesh for us, nor died in the flesh for us."

"Now the simple question is—in what sense did the Lord mean to be understood when using these words? And why does this note introduce interpretations which it was obviously out of the question either for Him to intend, or His hearers to imagine? Their difficulty was what they expressed; 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' Surely they could never suppose He would give them 'man's natural and carnal apprehension' to eat. Again, it said 'dead flesh separated from the spirit, in the gross manner they supposed they were to eat His flesh.' Now, where is there the slightest ground for asserting that they took His words in any such sense? Nothing had been said about 'dead flesh,' and their own expressions prove no such meaning had occurred to them. Their ground of perplexity was, as they describe it, 'how can a living man give us his flesh to eat?' So that two out of the three meanings ascribed in this note to His words are obviously, the one irrelevant, the other gratuitous.

"The third is certainly an instance of disingenuity almost unprecedented. Since it first coolly assumes the truth of the very thing to be proved by Roman Catholics, (and which I moreover believe to be effectually disproved thereby); and then proceeds, upon the assumption of its truth, to defend it from an objection, which no human being who allowed its truth could ever make, by an argument which is assuredly a *chef d'œuvre* of irrelevancy. Since it is just this—you cannot deny the efficacy of the mass, for it is true that Jesus Christ died on the cross. Now, we Protestants do deny the sacrifice of the mass, not because we disbelieve, but because we do believe, the sufficiency of the atonement; because we understand St. Paul to argue that repetition of sacrifice is the evidence of *insufficiency*. But it assuredly would be a strange way of arguing against us to reverse our position, and say—if you Protestants deny the *corporal* presence of the Lord Jesus in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, you must also deny both the incarnation and the atonement of the Saviour. It is the height of blasphemy to deny the one, therefore it is also the height of blasphemy to deny the other.

"If this note contains, in this part of it, a relevant argument, this is what it asserts. It assumes what it should prove, namely, the truth of a *corporal* presence! passes over, without the slightest notice the direct repugnancy between that supposition and these words of our Lord, which were meant to condemn any *carnal* view whatever of them: and then proceeds to condemn a depreciation of the efficacy of the sacrifice of the mass, which no one who admitted its truth could hold, by an argument of such irrelevancy as to be, I think, without parallel. For this last, if its words have any meaning, would run thus. The incarnation of Christ Jesus, the atonement of Christ Jesus, are facts; therefore the sacrifice of the mass is a fact likewise. If you disbelieve the latter, you must deny the former. The artifice consists, then, in the semblance of honesty, which seems to exhibit the truth of our Lord's words, though ascribing to them two senses, of which the one is gratuitous and the other impossible; in assuming as true a third, which they were suited to cor-

rect; and in omitting wholly the fourth, which they were intended and fitted to convey. Thus the sophistry escapes detection, and an occasion of correcting error becomes, in the hands of those who are determined not to be corrected, the means of hiding and propagating it."

"You have, I think," answered Father M., "shewn very plainly both the object and the errors of this note. What struck me had been, the assumption and the omission which you mention. I had been quite satisfied of its dishonesty, and grievously distressed by it."

"Have you ever read Cardinal Wiseman's Lectures on the Eucharist?" said Mr. R.

"No; I had no heart to take it up. I thought him a safe guide at first, and when I began to seek proofs of the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church, I took his list of testimonies to it. But, upon examination, I found them very far, indeed, from proving what he asserted, and therefore I have no confidence in him."

"I am sorry you were not tempted to go a little further," said Mr. R. "You would have found, perhaps, additional ground of dissatisfaction with him, or I am much mistaken. He shows, in more instances than one, a most un-Romanist disregard of what others of his communion have said. In the present case he flatly contradicts the note of which we have been speaking. It avers, as we have seen, that the Jews *mistook* our Lord's meaning, and understood him in a 'gross, vulgar, and carnal' manner, which he sought to correct. The Cardinal, on the other side, alleges that they understood him rightly, and attaches so much importance to this view as to maintain that, if the Jews were, as this note alleges, *wrong* in their interpretation of our Lord's words, Protestants are right and Catholics are wrong in their doctrine."

Tom Connell's eyes opened pretty widely at this announcement, and he opened his mouth just as widely as his eyes, exclaiming, "I often heard that many Catholics, who daren't for their lives go the least mite or morsel agin the Church, care very little about going a great way agin the Bible. But it's a burning shame for a Cardinal, who ought to know better, to do the like."

"Take care, Tom, that you do not make a mistake, and do a wrong here," said Mr. R. "Cardinal Wiseman has said some strange things. And when he has an object in misleading Protestant Englishmen, who are lovers of freedom, as to the views of Roman Catholics, appears to me to care very little, at times, what he says. In the present case you must, however, remember it is not the actual text of the Bible which he contradicts, but a note in it, though that same note has been approved of by the prelates of his Church in this land. Our poor Roman Catholic countrymen are sadly deceived in thinking there are not quarrels enough, and bitter ones too, among those whom they are taught to believe can never err, or oppose each other. I have been sorely tempted, at times, to believe that the strongest bond of union among many of them is their hostility to Protestants."

"Maybe," said Tom, "it's something like some of the grand husbands and wives we hear tell of, who are mighty sweet to each other when they are on their good behaviour afore their company, but quarrel like cat and dog as soon as ever their backs are turned."

"That does not often occur with you and my kind nurse, Ellen, I am pretty sure, Tom," said Father M.; "And now (turning to the Rector), will you let me see what the Cardinal has said in contradiction of this?"

"Tha: I can readily do," was the reply. And taking from his book-shelf Cardinal Wiseman's lectures on the Eucharist, read the following passages:—

"I assert, therefore, that if we accurately consider the phraseology of this portion of the chapter, according to the only manner in which it could possibly be understood by the Jews whom Christ addressed, we must be convinced that the doctrine now delivered was of a real eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood of Him who addressed them."—p. 56.

"One thing now only remains to decide the question finally: were the Jews *right*, inso far as understanding Him, or were they *wrong*? If they were *right*, then so are Catholics, who likewise take his words literally; if *wrong*, then Protestants are right when they understand him figuratively."—94.

"While the Jews understood our Saviour to speak of *really* intending to give them His flesh to eat, if they were *wrong*, can we suppose Him to answer them by saying, that His flesh was *really* meat? or can we, under these circumstances, imagine Him to use the word at all, and that twice and emphatically—unless he wished to be taken literally?"—p. 121.

"These extracts are quite explicit," continued Mr. R. "The Cardinal's argument is, that as our Lord did not correct (which, however, I aver, he very clearly did) the sense which the Jews attached to His words, that sense must be the *right* one, and, on this supposition, founds the proof of his doctrine. His admission is, that if they were *wrong* in it, then the Protestant, and not the Roman Catholic view of the Eucharist must be *correct*."

"I'll muzzle the schoolmaster, and stop his mouth for ever more," cried out Tom Connell, in great exultation. "I have him now as sure as I'm alive. Won't it be a grand thing all out to get a great Cardinal, and their own Bible proving that Protestants are right, and that, all of

their own accord. That's grand. I never thought it would come to that with them."

"What do you mean, Tom?" said Mr. R.

"Why, your honour, haven't it as clean as little Tommy's face on a Sunday morning? Doesn't the Cardinal say that if the Jews were wrong, then Protestants must be right? and doesn't his own Bible say that they were wrong? So isn't it 'a dead lock', that if their great bishop and their own Bible are both right (and if they allow either of them to be in the wrong, they're not likely soon to hear the end of that come down), they prove between them, without a morsel of help from us, that the Protestant doctrine is the true thing after all!"

"Bravo, Tom," said Mr. R. "You certainly have your old opponent on the horns of a dilemma there."

"And what is that, sir?" asked Tom, who pictured some escape for the schoolmaster in words which he dreaded because he did not understand. "You don't mean to say he can get out of it?"

"Indeed I do not," replied the clergyman, smiling at Tom's apprehensions. "You have him safe enough. You will just be like the executioner who should say to the man who resists being hung—die you must; but which would you like the knot to be tied under your right ear or your left?"

"Oh, I see now what you mean, sir," said Tom, somewhat relieved. "It's just what we say, 'out of the frying-pan into the fire.' Isn't that it?"

"I am afraid I should be puzzled to give you a better explanation of 'the horns of a dilemma'; your own will answer famously."

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## The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, APRIL 17, 1857.

THAT a man who has adopted the belief that our Lord, in founding a Church which was to be the pillar and ground of the truth, endowed the Bishops of Rome with the peculiar privilege of infallibility, and constituted them to the end of time His vicars and vicegerents upon earth, who were, therefore, ordained to stand in His place, and by His authority to guide and rule the world, should submit himself absolutely and implicitly to such an authority, and even hold that all temporal authority should bow before it, appears to us to be not only rational, but reasonable. It would, indeed, we think, be the extreme of inconsistency to act otherwise upon such principles.

In arriving, however, at such a belief, one would naturally inquire, not only what is the nature of the evidence that the Bishops of Rome were appointed Christ's vicegerents, but how long has such authority been admitted or established. The study of history is obviously as necessary as that of theology, to enable any one to arrive at a safe conclusion in such matters. For we are not dealing with a newly granted or appointed institution, but one which, if it ever existed, was constituted eighteen centuries ago.

If the Bishops of Rome have at all times and under all circumstances, not only maintained pure and unchanged a given system of opinions, but have in the exercise of such divinely constituted power excluded all who differed from those opinions (as it must have been their duty to do) from church communion, their conduct would have been consistent with their claims, and one would have given the Popes, at least, credit for believing that, in real truth, these assumed prerogatives were divinely conferred upon them.

Should we, however, in studying the authentic

history of the Church, find that the Bishops of Rome, descending from their supreme dignity, have always played the more timid part of *watching*, instead of *guiding* the progress of opinions; temporising with and balancing conflicting parties, until one of them had gained a decided superiority over the other, and then tardily coming forward to *sanction* the victorious party, instead of themselves deciding on which side the truth was, and thereby *making it* victorious by the power of their divine commission to teach the world; should we find that the Bishops of Rome were ever ready to tolerate the widest difference, even upon this all-important subject of the nature and extent of their supposed commission, provided, merely, that it appeared more politic to connive at such dissent than boldly to excommunicate those who held it; we should, then, be compelled to conclude that the Bishops of Rome *never did believe* in the reality of their assumed powers, and were, therefore, too glad to recognise all as true sons of the Church who did not openly throw off all allegiance to the (so called) "Holy See."

The history of the Gallican Church in France strikingly exemplifies our position. It may now suit the purpose of Roman Catholic writers to represent "Gallicanism" as an almost obsolete form of opinion, and possibly enough its spirit may, at the present day, be well nigh extinct in France, as well as among the Roman Catholics in our own countries. The time was, however, when, for centuries, the great mass of the Roman Catholic Church in France, while it acknowledged communion in doctrinal points with Rome, openly professed their disbelief in doctrines which are now represented as essential elements in the only true faith. Take, for example, the dogma of Papal infallibility, or the doctrine that the authority of Bishops emanates solely from the Pope, and that *they are*, consequently, merely *his* delegates. These are matters going manifestly to the very foundation of the Papal assumptions, without a belief in which none could be said to treat the Bishops of Rome as the vicegerents of Christ, or their authority as the only divinely constituted one; and yet for centuries the Popes recognised the Gallican Church and its liberties, and remained in acknowledged communion with it, even appointing Cardinals from the dignitaries of that Church, of whom one, the celebrated Cardinal of Lorraine, took an active part in the proceedings of the Council of Trent, which, after 25 sessions, spread over 20 years, and 5 pontificates, at last separated without being able to frame any decree as to the authority and appointment of Bishops which would satisfy the Pope on the one side and the bishops of France on the other.

Can any thinking man believe that any consideration, but that of the temporising policy which made the Pope think it *inexpedient* to set so large and important a section of the Church at defiance, prevented the Popes from excommunicating and anathematising the Gallicans, just as, at a subsequent period, they feared not to do with regard to the less influential and less numerous party of the Jansenists? The Gallican Church was *free*, and denied the infallibility of the Pope even in matters of faith, without the concurrence of a general council; but it was numerous and powerful! The Jansenists denied the infallibility of the Pope merely in matters of *fact*, and it was anathematised and excommunicated (though it was not in the Pope's power to destroy it); but then the Jansenists were more pious and zealous than numerous or powerful, and, therefore, could be trampled on with impunity. Is this the conduct which might have been expected from those who knew and felt themselves to be armed with a divinely constituted authority? or was it the result of that truckling and time-serving spirit in poor human nature, which is ever ready to bow before the powerful and oppress the weak?

The independent spirit of the Gallican Church was, however, not confined to the powerful nation of France. So late as the year 1785, a congress of German bishops assembled at Ems, at which the Archbishops of Mentz, Treves, Cologne, and Salzburg assisted.

At that congress a number of resolutions were come to as to the extent and nature of the Episcopal jurisdiction, and the degree in which it should be subjected to the control of the Roman See. In the preface to these resolutions there occurs the following passage:—"Although the Pope at Rome is and continues to be the head and Primate of the whole Church, and the centre of unity, holding from God the jurisdiction required for that purpose, insomuch that every Catholic is bound ever and most respectfully to yield him canonical obedience; yet all other privileges and reservations *not connected with the primacy in the earlier centuries of the Christian era*,<sup>a</sup> but which have emanated from the later Decretals of Isidore, to the manifest prejudice of the Bishops, cannot, now that the forgery and fallacy of them is acknowledged, be drawn within the limits of that jurisdiction, as they must be classed with the encroachments of the Roman Court; the Bishops, then, are justified in *reassuming the exercise of the authority granted them by God*, more particularly as no remonstrances addressed to the Papal See relative to this subject have been of any avail."

And again:—"If the Archbishops and Bishops of Germany should be again reinstated in their rights, *which belong to them by the appointment of God*, and should be emancipated from the principal causes of complaint against the Court of Rome, they will then, and not till then, be capable to proceed to the amendment of church discipline in all its parts, according to uniform principles to take the necessary steps to extirpate all defects and abuses which have gradually crept in."

The same Archbishops addressed a letter to the Emperor, which accompanied these resolutions, in which they say—"That, in the discharge of their pastoral duties, they were circumscribed by nothing so much as by the *encroachments* of the Court of Rome. These encroachments, *so prejudicial to the liberty of the German Church*, were on the increase, indeed, at an early period, and especially since the general adoption of Decretals fabricated by Isidore. After which period these usurpations were extended more and more by the retainers of the Court of Rome. Such grievous wrongs have compelled the German nation for centuries past to raise many and loud complaints, and, at the Councils of Constance, Basle, and Trent, press for a radical and complete redress, which, however, it has never been able to obtain."

Now, how did the all-powerful possessors of the Papal See and so-called Vicars and Vicegerents of Christ upon earth deal with these remonstrants? It is true their indignant remonstrance against the usurpations and encroachments of the Roman See, under the false title of the *forged Decretals*, did not succeed in inducing the Popes to renounce their ill-founded and arrogant pretensions. But did they excommunicate the German Church because their bishops *claimed to derive their rights immediately from God*, and refused to recognise the absolute supremacy of the See of Rome, as Vicegerents of Christ upon earth, from whom all their power was derived, and who had, therefore, absolute authority to rule and mould the German Church after their own infallible wisdom or good pleasure? No such thing. For just as the Gallican Church, because it was that of a great nation, was spared and conciliated, so the German Church was also a powerful establishment, and the Popes were too

politic to cut off from their communion such a numerous and influential body, merely because it was unwilling to admit such questionable and disputed points as those of Papal infallibility and Papal supremacy!

Now, however impolitic and unsafe it might have been for a temporal monarch to have broken with those otherwise in friendly relations with him, because they would not recognize his lawful authority over them, yet what was it but the most criminal pusillanimity in the representatives of Christ upon earth to condescend to come down from their *divinely delegated* position, and recognize as *subjects* those who in reality *rebelled* against their authority, and acted in boasted independence of their asserted claims? that is, if the Popes really believed in the genuineness of their title to such divinely constituted authority.

See also the Papal mode of dealing with the once numerous and powerful Dominican and Franciscan orders. The internal peace of the Church was for centuries disturbed by the angry and bitter disputes which were openly carried on between them. Those dissensions included no less vital a matter than that which has in our own times been thought worthy of being made an "article of faith"—the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Many successive Popes seem to have more or less openly favoured the growth of this opinion. We can scarcely suppose that Pope Sixtus IV. would have established a special "office" in honour of the Immaculate Conception, without himself believing it to be a truth. We are bound to believe that Pope Alexander VII., in granting peculiar privileges, such as plenary indulgences, to those who advocated and professed this "pious opinion," as it was then termed, himself believed the dogma as firmly as Pius IX. when he took on himself to proclaim it to the world on the 8th December, 1854, as an article of faith. Well, then, if Pope Sixtus IV. and Pope Alexander VII. were Vicars of Christ and His Vicegerents on earth, with the gifts of supremacy and infallibility divinely conferred upon them, so that they neither could be deceived or their power lawfully disputed, was it not their *duty* to settle such distracting and unseemly disputes *at once*, and to excommunicate those who refused to obey their supreme and infallible decision upon a matter which no Roman Catholic now in communion with the Church of Rome can deny to be a matter *de fide*? Why was not this dogma definitely settled by Pope Sixtus IV.'s supreme and infallible authority in 1483? Can any one doubt that the true reason was this—that the Popes in those days had not attained the undisputed possession of either supremacy or infallibility? If any Pope 400 or even 200 years ago had ventured on his own mere authority, without the concurrence of a General Council, to decide what was or was not an article of faith, he would have had the independent spirit of the French and German Churches in open arms against him, and he would have lost as much by a great schism in the West, as in the ninth century his predecessor lost in the East by his arrogant claim of supremacy over the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria.

Hence the Dominicans and Franciscans were left to wage war with one another, and while the majority of the Popes more or less openly favoured the growing "pious opinion" of the latter, they did not venture to interfere between the belligerent parties further than a few vain attempts to keep the peace between them as well as they were able, without running risk of bringing either of these then powerful bodies into direct collision with the Holy See.

The following extract from the bull "*Sollicitudo omnium*" of Pope Alexander VII. we think not undeserving of careful study by those who are now disposed to yield to his suc-

<sup>a</sup> We hope to take an early opportunity of explaining to our readers what this really amounted to.—ED.

or Pius IX., who, on 8th December, 1854, without the aid of a general council, or even going through the form of consulting the bishops who by his invitation went to Rome to join in this pontifical triumph, did what neither Sixtus IV. or Alexander VII. was able to do, though he (Pius IX.) admittedly possesses no more supreme power and no greater infallibility than either of them.

No one, we think, can read the following without being convinced that Pope Alexander VII., in the year 1661, went as far as he could then venture to do, having regard to the existing state of opinions, and that if he did not define the new dogma two centuries ago, it was not from want of will, but want of power to enforce his decree, if he had ventured on a step so hazardous:—

"It is an ancient devotion of the faithful in Christ towards the most blessed mother the Virgin Mary to believe that her soul, in the first instant of its creation, was preserved exempt from the spot of original sin by a special grace and privilege, by the merits of Jesus Christ her Son, the Redeemer of the human race, and to celebrate solemnly the feast of the conception in this belief. The number of the faithful and this worship have increased since the apostolical constitution which our predecessor, Sixtus IV., of happy memory, published to recommend it, and which the Council of Trent has renewed and commanded to be observed. This devotion and worship towards the Holy Virgin has made new progress, since, with the approbation of the Roman Pontiffs, a religious order has been founded and confraternities established under this title, and indulgences have been granted to them by the Popes, so that several celebrated universities have joined themselves to this opinion, and almost all Catholics have now embraced this belief. But since, by reason of the contrary opinion, some maintained in their sermons, in their lessons of theology, and in public theses, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived with original sin, and scandals, disputes, and dissensions offensive to God have arisen among Christian people, Paul V., of happy memory, our predecessor, forbade them to teach publicly, or to preach opinions contrary to that of which we have spoken above; and Gregory XV., also our predecessor, not being content with this prohibition, extended it to private conferences, and, moreover, ordered in favour of this same opinion that in the sacrifice of the mass, and in celebrating the divine office, both in public and private, they should use no other term than that of 'the conception.' However, as almost all the bishops of Spain, and Philip, the Catholic King of Spain, have represented to us that in that country some persons, continuing to defend the contrary opinion in spite of the aforesaid prohibitions, attack and decry, both in private and in public, the Immaculate Conception, and so interpret the privilege which the sovereign Pontiffs have granted to this devotion and festival that they destroy it altogether, and even dare to deny that the Roman Church favours this opinion and devotion, whence the disorders, scandals, and divisions, which our predecessors, Paul V. and Gregory XV., wished to prevent, continue still to this day, and there is reasonable ground to fear that this diversity of opinions may produce in future still greater evils.

"Now, we having taken into consideration that the holy Roman Church solemnly celebrates the fete of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and that it has formerly ordained a special office for it, according to the pious, devout, and laudable institution of our predecessor Sixtus IV., and being desirous, according to the examples of the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, to show ourselves favourable to this laudable piety and devotion, and to this festival and worship, which has not changed in the Roman Church since its first institution, \* \* \* \* \* we renew the constitutions and decrees of the Pontiffs, our predecessors, and especially those of Sixtus IV., Paul V., and Gregory XV., issued in favour of the opinion which holds that the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary in its creation, and when it was united to her body, was prevented by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and preserved from original sin; and likewise in favour of the festival and worship which they render to the Conception of the Virgin in consequence of this opinion." \* \* \* \* \*

The Bull then goes on to prohibit preaching or publishing anything contrary to the "pious opinion," and then proceeds thus:—

"We prohibit to all sorts of persons, conformably to the constitution of Sixtus IV., to assert either that those who hold the contrary opinion, to wit, that the glorious Virgin Mary was conceived with original sin, are heretics, or that they have become guilty of mortal sin, since the Roman Church and the Holy See have not yet decided on this matter, as we now, ourselves, by no means wish or intend to decide thereupon; and even in addition to the penalties to which Sixtus IV. and other Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, have subjected those who have dared to condemn the contrary opinion of heresy, or of mortal sin, or impiety, we subject them to still more grave punish-

ment, such as we have above imposed upon those who may violate this constitution; and it is our will that not only the bishops and prelates superior, but the local ordinaries, and even the inquisitors of heresy, wherever deputed, should proceed against, and make search for, and punish severely those who shall contravene this present constitution, whether regulars, of whatsoever order they may be, even the Company of Jesus, or ecclesiastical and secular persons, of whatever sort, state, rank, or condition soever they may be. \* \* \* \* \*

Given at Rome under the ring of the fisherman this 8th December, 1661, and of our Pontificate the Seventh."

We ask any intelligent Roman Catholic who is disposed to attach value to the boasted living power in the Church to decide controversies, whether this was not the time for the Pope to have shown his infallible and supreme power as Vicar and Vicegerent of Christ? and can any one believe that Alexander VII. would not have done it, if he had not well known that such an assumption would, if attempted, have proved a perfect failure, and only further fomented the strife and scandal which he desired to appease, if he had only possessed the power to do so?

If the Popes be the appointed Vicars and Vicegerents of Christ upon earth, was it not a base dereliction of duty and abdication of their Divine functions in Alexander VII. and his predecessors to allow such bitter conflicts and notorious scandals to rage within the Church for centuries, and yet deliberately to announce to the world that they did not even *wish* to put an end to the disputes by deciding on which side the real truth was, as Pius IX. did boldly, after the lapse of several centuries, when all dissension upon the matter had long since died out of itself among the adherents of the Church of Rome?

#### TRANSLATION OF A LETTER SENT IN AUGUST, 1856, TO POPE PIUS IX., BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF UTRECHT, AND THE BISHOPS OF HAARLEM AND DEVENTER.

"Most Holy Father—In the year of the incarnation of our Lord, 1854, on the 8th December, was solemnly proclaimed by your Holiness in St. Peter's, the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin, mother of our Redeemer, as though it were a dogma of the Christian faith. We are unable to express how very greatly this circumstance has astonished, nay even afflicted us. We shall probably be blamed for having so long deferred expressing our sentiments upon this extraordinary event. The orthodox faith of the Church of Utrecht is more than sufficiently known throughout the Catholic world. That this Church should directly, and at once, have rejected the new and false doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the most Holy Virgin Mary is, doubtless, the sentiment of all true Catholics, but, in her opinion, this feeling is not a reason strong enough to withhold her from openly opposing it now. Indeed that we should openly repudiate and oppose it is due alike to the dignity of our office, to the Catholic faith, and to defenders of the truth.

"We should consider ourselves as unfaithful to our duty if we remained longer silent on this subject. The true faith, in which, from our very infancy, we have been instructed, forbids us to be silent. However unworthy we may be of the office we hold, it is our bounden duty to publish to the eye and ear of the Catholic Church our sentiments respecting these events. We are fully convinced that nothing can be added to or taken away from the faith once delivered to the saints. To us, as bishops of the Catholic Church, is committed the undefined keeping of that faith. 'That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep,' wrote Paul the Apostle to his dearly beloved son, Timothy. Then St. Vincent of Lerins considers this as not addressed to Timothy alone—as many prelates as would succeed Timothy in the aforesaid character must consider these words as addressed to themselves. The opinion respecting the immaculate conception of our Lord's mother, Mary, publicly and solemnly proclaimed, would increase that faith once so delivered. Prior to the 11th century of the birth of Christ such a privilege of the blessed Virgin has never and nowhere been known. Whether we turn to the Eastern or to the Western Church, and question both parts of the Catholic world, not the least trace of such a sentiment is to be found before the above stated period. Whether we address the popes, your predecessors, before the aforesaid century, we are fully convinced that such a sentiment was not felt by either of them. It would even be easy for us to point out instances of their contrary mode of thinking. Let us listen to what Innocent III. and V., and to what Clement VI. says: We could easily quote passages from the Holy Scriptures which are diametrically in contradiction with the new doctrine. Therefore out of these two sources, of God's Word and tradition, nothing can be extracted in favour of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin mother of our Lord. Therefore, for the keeping of the deposit of faith, we exclaim with a loud voice against this doctrine; affirming that it is branded on the forehead with the mark 'novelty.' This first and important motive prompts us to express our sentiments upon this subject.

"Neither were those bishops of the Catholic Church at liberty to express their sentiments upon this doctrine; and this is the second complaint which we have to bring before your Holiness. The office of judge belongs to all the bishops—that

peculiar privilege of the episcopal character is here in no wise regarded; no regard has been had to the opinion of the prelates as a body; no ear has been lent to the voices of their churches, but simply from the voices of those who went to Rome was any sentiment heard upon this subject. And assuredly the right of judgment is a privilege due to the bishops. The Council of Jerusalem, the first and the pattern of all synods, evidently grants them this right. After the Head of the Apostles, St. Peter, had spoken, St. James stood up, saying: *My sentence is*, Acts xv. 19. Now, what bishops (as the successors and substitutes of the Apostles) were in office when you proclaimed this new doctrine? They were, for a certainty, either stupid, dumb witnesses, or else base flatterers—therefore with what contempt is the episcopal dignity treated in an apparently respectable conclave! no dauntless sentinel was to be seen at his post. Most holy father, with your leave be it said, in order to raise the Head higher than it should be the most illustrious members of the body have been crushed. Thanks to heaven, we have not yet forgotten the rank we hold, and we therefore complain to you of the injustice done to us respecting it.

"We are urged by a third reason, viz., charity towards our Church, to reject the fabulous dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin. This charity demands our utmost care to guard her free from all false doctrines. Thanks to heaven, the faith of our Church has remained undefiled until the present day; though her foundations, in this country, have frequently been shaken. We consider it as our duty to remove from her all innovations respecting the truth of her faith. For the last three years a confusion has intruded itself into the ecclesiastical ordinations in this country, therefore our faith is in danger of being polluted, and it is our object to prevent this danger. We must endeavour, by all possible means, to present that Church as a pure bride to Jesus. To bequeath the faith of our forefathers as simple and pure to our posterity as we have received it from our ancestors is with us an object of great importance. Rejecting every innovation, and attached to ancient rites, we thus, with Tertullian, sue to separate the true doctrine from the false: 'What was first delivered came undeniably from God, and is truth; that which has been introduced at a later period is foreign and false' (Lib. de Prescr, cap 31). This exhortation is directed to ourselves just as much as to Timothy by the teacher of the Gentiles, viz., to 'avoid profane and vain babblings' (1 Tim. vi. 20). The innovation of words, that is, of doctrine, things, and opinions which are contrary to olden times: 'Should such innovations be adopted, why then the faith of our blessed forefathers must necessarily be entirely, or for the most part, violated.' These are the words of St. Vincent of Lerins (Com. monit. c. 24).

"About 200 years ago, the ambassador of the Spanish king, Philip IV., requested in his master's name, that your predecessor Alexander the VII. should give him a positive answer respecting the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin. This prelate addressed the following questions to Cardinal Bona: whether he could decide this difference? 'That neither the Pope himself, nor the Church, was able to establish new articles of faith; but only declare what God may have revealed to His Church, after the traditions handed down to us by the Apostles were duly examined, down to the present time.' Such was the answer of that pious and learned Cardinal. 'Should I not,' repeated the Pope, "by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, be able to determine what ought to be your opinion respecting this difference?" 'To you, and you only, most holy father, could anything revealed unto you from God be of any service. From this it is not to be inferred that you could be at liberty to oblige the faithful and myself to accept your verdict.' Such were the reasonings of Bona. O may this most wise, most genuine catholic sentiment, be embraced by all the successors of St. Peter. We have considered it not only an honour, but also a duty on our part to offer to your Holiness our Pastoral Instruction, which we forward to you with this letter; and in order that the Catholics of the Netherlands, and more especially in our own parishes, should be better acquainted with what they should think of this new doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin, we have published it in the language of the country. Our Church has repeatedly expressed a desire for a General Council, and it appears that it is now needful to repeat this appeal. On account of a violation of the pledge of faith, and on account of the injustice committed towards Episcopacy, at the time the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin Mary, mother of our Saviour, was established, as though this were a Divine revelation, we retain the right of making an appeal, when time and opportunity present, to a future General Council. May the Father of light open the eyes of our heart, and work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. With the most profound respect, we the undersigned are, most Holy Father,

Your Holiness's most humble servants,

(Signed)

JOHN, Archbishop of Utrecht,  
HENRY JOHN, Bishop of Haarlem,  
HERMAN, Bishop of Deventer.

#### Correspondence.

##### ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—As a good action cannot be too often repeated, allow me to refer you again to CATHOLIC LAYMAN for June, 1854, page 71, column 1, where you insinuate that it is not *practically* true that Catholics say, when addressing God, "Have mercy on us; forgive us our sins;" and, when addressing the Blessed Virgin or saints, "Pray for us"—which is in plain English to maintain that we pray to the saints to *have mercy on us*; to *forgive us our sins*, and that we give them the adoration and worship which is justly and exclusively due to God. This is precisely the charge

\* They allude to the Papal alienation of 1853, so nobly resisted by the Protestants in Holland.—ED.